



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

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FEDERAL AGENTS IN SAN DIEGO INVESTIGATING CROSS BORDER TUNNEL NEAR OTAY MESA PORT

SAN DIEGO – Agents from a trio of federal agencies worked overnight and into today excavating a cross border tunnel discovered late yesterday near the Otay Mesa port of entry. The tunnel investigation is a coordinated effort involving U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), U.S. Customs and Border Protection Border Patrol, and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

As of early this afternoon, agents determined the primitive passageway, which originated in Mexico, and extended about 90 feet into the United States, was not complete. Located about one fourth of a mile east of the commercial compound at the Otay Mesa border crossing, the tunnel is buried about three feet underground. Agents say it appears the tunnel builders were attempting to connect the passageway to the storm drain system. Authorities brought in heavy equipment to aid with the investigation and are now filling in the tunnel with cement.

In addition to the U.S. agencies, the Tijuana Municipal Police Department and Mexico's federal police are assisting with the investigation on the Mexican side of the border.

"This represents another tremendous cooperative effort by all of the law enforcement agencies involved, including our counterparts in Mexico" said Michael Unzueta, the special agent-in-charge for ICE investigations in San Diego. "Our shared goal is to locate those associated with this criminal activity and dismantle their organization."

No arrests have yet been made in the case, but the investigation is ongoing.

Since 9/11, federal authorities have discovered at least 16 cross border tunnels along the U.S.-Mexico border in California and Arizona.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.